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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3738

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PRM, NEA/ELA, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL JO IZ

SUBJECT: Iraqis in Jordan Allege Mosul Violence Linked to Kurds, not al-Qaeda

REFS: A) Baghdad 3373; B) Baghdad 3365; C Baghdad 3314)

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¶1. (SBU) At the request of the Charge of the Apostolic Nunciature in Amman, Embassy EconOff Iraq-Watcher and Religious Freedom PolOff recently met with a group of Iraqis originally from the Mosul area. The delegation of approximately fifteen, consisting of both Sunni Muslims and Christians, presented an unsigned letter addressed to the U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, expressing their concern over recent violence toward Christians in the Mosul area of Iraq (reftels).

¶2. (SBU) Former Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan, Dr. Saddon Al-Zoubedi, the apparent spokesman for the group, disputed statements from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior that radical Islamic groups were behind the attacks, pointing out that al-Qaeda had denied involvement and that the Islamic Army had called publicly for Muslim militants to rush to the rescue of Christians, as the Quran dictated. He opined that the two major Kurdish parties were responsible. Others in the delegation noted that the Catholic Archbishop of Mosul had reported that his community was being targeted because they refused to endorse adding Mosul to a future Kurdish state. General Ghazi Khader Elias, retired advisor at the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, said the alleged Kurdish assault on the Christians of Mosul was strategically designed to elevate the issue to an international one that could then only be resolved by the creation of a self-rule area for Christians in Mosul, which would then later become part of a hoped-for Kurdish state.

¶3. (SBU) The letter "demanded" action by the U.S., the Vatican, and others, and asked for creation of an international commission to study the violence. A copy of the letter was also provided by the group to Embassy Baghdad. We have no way to determine the credibility of their allegations regarding culpability for the violence, but it conflicts with other reporting (ref A).

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